

RABIES: Shipping and Receiving Requirements

by Misty M. Lang, DOH/PHL

Rabies is not a common disease in Washington State. When it occurs in an animal, testing the animal's brain is the only means to determine if that animal had rabies. Transmission of the rabies virus occurs most commonly by animal bite, and rarely by saliva exposure only. Prompt testing of the brain after the animal's death is important so that the brain has not deteriorated too much and so treatment of the patient, if needed, can begin. Animal bites must be reported to the local health jurisdiction (LHJ). To find a phone number for your LHJ, please visit the following website: <http://www.doh.wa.gov/LHJMap/LHJMap.htm>. Your LHJ will assess the situation and determine if an animal should be tested for rabies or placed in quarantine for observation. If testing is necessary, your LHJ will arrange for transportation of the laboratory specimen to Washington State Public Health Laboratory or Seattle-King County Public Health Laboratories, as appropriate.

Prior to shipping specimens, the LHJ is required to contact Communicable Disease Epidemiology at (206) 418-5500 or (877) 539-4344.

Preparation of specimens for submission (whole bats and animal heads): Bats should be submitted fully intact. Other animals should be decapitated, since only the head is required for testing. Veterinarians should euthanize live bats since it is against the law to ship bats or any other animal alive. Please note that only veterinarians, animal control officers, local health and wildlife officials, and others who have rabies pre-exposure prophylaxis should remove animal heads.

It is important to transport the specimen to the Washington State Public Health Laboratories as soon as possible to ensure proper preservation of brain material. If a brain is too decomposed, it will not be suitable for testing.

Packaging and shipping instructions: The shipper is responsible for packaging specimens correctly and shipping them rapidly. The shipping company may return an incorrectly labeled package to the shipper. Workers who package specimens for shipping are legally required to take a class in shipment of infectious substances. The class is available commercially or through Washington State Public Health Laboratories Training Program. For more information on the classes, please e-mail PHL@doh.wa.gov or visit their website at:

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehsphl/phl/training/train.htm>.

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Practice Guidelines

The following practice guidelines have been developed by the Clinical Laboratory Advisory Council. They can be accessed at the following website:
www.doh.wa.gov/lqa.htm

Anemia	Lipid Screening
ANA	PAP Smear
Bioterrorism Event Mgmt	Point-of-Care Testing
Bleeding Disorders	PSA
Chlamydia	Rash Illness
Diabetes	Red Cell Transfusion
Group A Strep Pharyngitis	Renal Disease
Group B Streptococcus	STD
Hepatitis	Thyroid
HIV	Tuberculosis
Infectious Diarrhea	Urinalysis
Intestinal Parasites	Wellness

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Shipping materials that conform to current regulations are available from the LHJ.

Follow these directions to package a specimen for transport to the laboratory:

- Spray the animal head for fleas if needed.
- Place the whole bat or head of a larger animal in a plastic bag. Seal the bag tightly.
- Place the bag containing the bat or animal head inside a larger plastic bag. Seal this bag tightly.
- The shipping containers obtained from your LHJ consist of a plastic screw-capped jar or metal can (secondary container), absorbent material for the secondary container, and an insulated shipping box.
 - i. Place bagged bats or small animal heads in the secondary container which then fits into the small box.
 - ii. Larger animal heads require the white 10-liter metal drum that goes in the large beige with red and blue colored Air-Sea box.
- Place frozen ice packs between the secondary container and shipping box.
- Fill out the Rabies lab form (there should be a blank form inside the shipping box). Place the form in a ziplock bag and place in the box outside of the

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Website addresses:

DOH home page: <http://www.doh.wa.gov>

LQA home page: <http://www.doh.wa.gov/lqa.htm>

PHL home page:

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/EHSPHL/PHL/default.htm>

secondary container that holds the specimen.

Everything in the secondary container is considered potentially infectious and will be autoclaved after the lab testing is completed.

Information to accompany all specimens:

- ✓ Name, address, and phone number of the submitter
- ✓ Date of death and location where collected
- ✓ Species of animal
- ✓ Owner of animal - name, address, and phone number
- ✓ Person(s) and/or animal(s) exposed; date of exposure
- ✓ The name of the person to contact (usually a LHJ employee) with the results and a phone number where that person can be reached **must** be on this form. The contact person will notify the person bitten with the result.

- The outside of the cardboard box should have a "Diagnostic Specimen" label next to a diamond shape with "UN3373" inside the diamond. Other labels display the names and addresses of the shipper and recipient.
- Specimens should be shipped or delivered to the lab as *quickly as possible* (overnight FedEx or same-day bus service are commonly used transport methods). Always save the tracking number or bus bill so the package can be traced if it is lost.
- Horse or cow heads will not fit in the above packaging. When possible, remove the entire brain. A minimum of one-half of the cerebrum and full cross-sections of the cerebellum and the brain stem are needed. The brain can be packaged as above in the small or large box.
- If it is not possible to remove the brain, wrap the entire head in at least three plastic bags, each one separately sealed. Several frozen ice packs can be placed inside the outer bag. Place the wrapped head in a cardboard box. *Because this is not standard packaging, none of the shipping companies or Greyhound bus can ship the package. It must be delivered to the laboratory by private vehicle.*

Routine submissions can be received at the laboratory between 8AM and 5PM Monday - Friday. After hours submissions for evening or weekend testing **must** be approved by Communicable Disease Epidemiology (206) 418-5500 or (877) 539-4344 (both phone numbers are twenty-four hour numbers).

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Specimens should be delivered to:

Washington Public Health Laboratories
Attention: Virology
1610 NE 150th Street
Shoreline, WA 98155

Rabies laboratory phone number: (206) 418-5458.

Once the Virology laboratory receives a specimen, it will be date/time stamped and assigned an accession number. Rabies testing is scheduled for completion within 24 hours. The Virology laboratory will notify the LHJ with results and the report will be mailed to the submitting facility.

NOTE: The PHL Directory of Services is now online at the Washington State Department of Health Public Health Laboratories website: <http://www.doh.wa.gov/EHSPHL/PHL/default.htm>.

Advanced Blood Cell Morphology Training Class

DATE, TIME & LOCATION: April 12, 2006 from 8:45 a.m to 4:00 p.m at the DOH Public Health Laboratories in Shoreline, WA.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: This one-day course will cover the following subjects: selected cases involving WBCs, RBCs and/or platelet pathology; examination of red and white cell morphology using slide presentations and quizzes; microscopic examination of actual case slides; lab challenges - examination of unknown specimens to test your abilities.

COURSE PREREQUISITES: In order to be eligible to take this course, the student must have either taken a basic microscopy class or have at least 6 months experience using a light microscope.

TUITION: \$115.00 if registered on or before April 5, 2006, or \$125.00 thereafter.

Advanced Blood Cell Morphology Training Class Registration Form

Name: _____

Employer: _____

Employer Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Work Phone: _____ FAX: _____

E-mail: _____ Message Phone: _____

HOW TO REGISTER: Complete the registration form and mail to the **Department of Health, Training Program, 1610 NE 150th Street, PO Box 550501, Shoreline, WA 98155-9701**; fax to **206-418-5445**, or e-mail to **phl.training@doh.wa.gov**. A registration form is available at our web site: **<http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehsphil/phl/training/train.htm>**. DO NOT SEND MONEY WITH YOUR REGISTRATION FORM.

Antimicrobial Susceptibility Testing Webcast

On January 25, 2006, the National Laboratory Training Network (NLTN) sponsored a teleconference presented by Janet Hindler, Ph.D., from UCLA Medical Center titled "What's New in the 2006 CLSI (formerly NCCLS) Standards for Antimicrobial Testing."

The teleconference is now available as a Web-on-demand presentation. There is no cost to review the webcast. To view the webcast and download the handouts, go to:

<http://www.phppo.cdc.gov/nltm/nptcs/ast012606.aspx>

Calendar of Events

PHL Training Classes:

(<http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehsphl/phl/training/train.htm>)

Advanced Blood Cell Morphology

April 12 Shoreline

Basic Course in Urine Sediments

May 10 OR 11 Shoreline

WSSCLS/NWSSAMT Spring Meeting

April 20-22, 2006 Lynnwood

Northwest Medical Laboratory Symposium

October 18-21, 2006 Portland

13th Annual Clinical Laboratory Conference

November 2006 Seattle

Contact information for the events listed above can be found on page 2. The Calendar of Events is a list of upcoming conferences, deadlines, and other dates of interest to the clinical laboratory community. If you have events that you would like to have included, please mail them to ELABORATIONS at the address on page 2. Information must be received at least one month before the scheduled event. The editor reserves the right to make final decisions on inclusion.